South and East Asia, Russia and other East European countries as also in major Latin American countries. Fall in oil prices also had its impact on our exports to Middle East. Quite a number of items for which good export prospects exist in developed countries could not do well due to restrictive trade measures including anti dumping and anti-subsidy measures by these countries.

(d) The promotion of exports has been the constant endeavour of the Government. Measures to boost exports, including those from the engineering sector, consist of various provisions under the Export-Import Policy including Duty Exemption Scheme, Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, Special Import Licence, Duty Drawback Scheme, Exemption under Section 80 HHC of Income Tax Act, Assistance from Market Development Fund etc. Engineering goods exporters also received promotional support through various activities of the Engineering Export Promotion Council like participation in internationl engineering goods fairs, visit of engineering goods delegation abroad, Buyer-Seller Meets, Market Studies, organising specialised exhibitions in India etc.

(e) The target for Engineering Goods Sector for the year 1999-2000 is US $ Mn. 4550.

New Export Policy

1851. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a new policy of export is in the offing;

(b) what will be the feature of the new export policy; and

(c) what are Government's plans for increasing exports from our country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The review of the export policy is an ongoing process. The amended Export-Import Policy is notified in the month of March every year. Accordingly, revised policy shall be announced before the commencement of the next financial year after considering various suggestions received from the Trade and Industry and various ministries and export promotion concern.

(c) Government had announced various measures on 31.3.99 to increase the competitiveness of Indian exports and to reduce the

transactional cost and time with a view to providing level playing field to Indian exporters. These measures include extension of zero-duty EPCG shceme to textile sector and certain sub-sectors of chemicals; exemption of additional customs duty under zero duty EPCG scheme for marine and software sectors; introduction of Annual Advance Licence Scheme; rationalisation of EOU/EPZ scheme; recognition for export of services, decentralisation of decision making and time bound disposal of various categories of applications.

Potential for Newsprint Production

1852. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that we have a higher potential for newsprint production now; and

(b) what steps are being taken by Government to increase indigenous newsprint production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has taken a number of steps to increase the indigenous production of newsprint which include:—

(i) Newsprint Industry has been delicensed subject to locational policy.

(ii) Newsprint has been exempted from excise duty.

(iii) There is a concessional rate of Customs Duty @ 5% on pulp for manufacture of newsprint.

(iv) With a view to encouraging the indigenous availability of newsprint, such paper mills which are producing newsprint conforming to BIS standards are placed in Schedule-I to the Newsprint Control Order, 1962 declaring them as mills manufacturing newsprint.

Import of Newsprint

1853. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of newsprint expected to be imported this year;